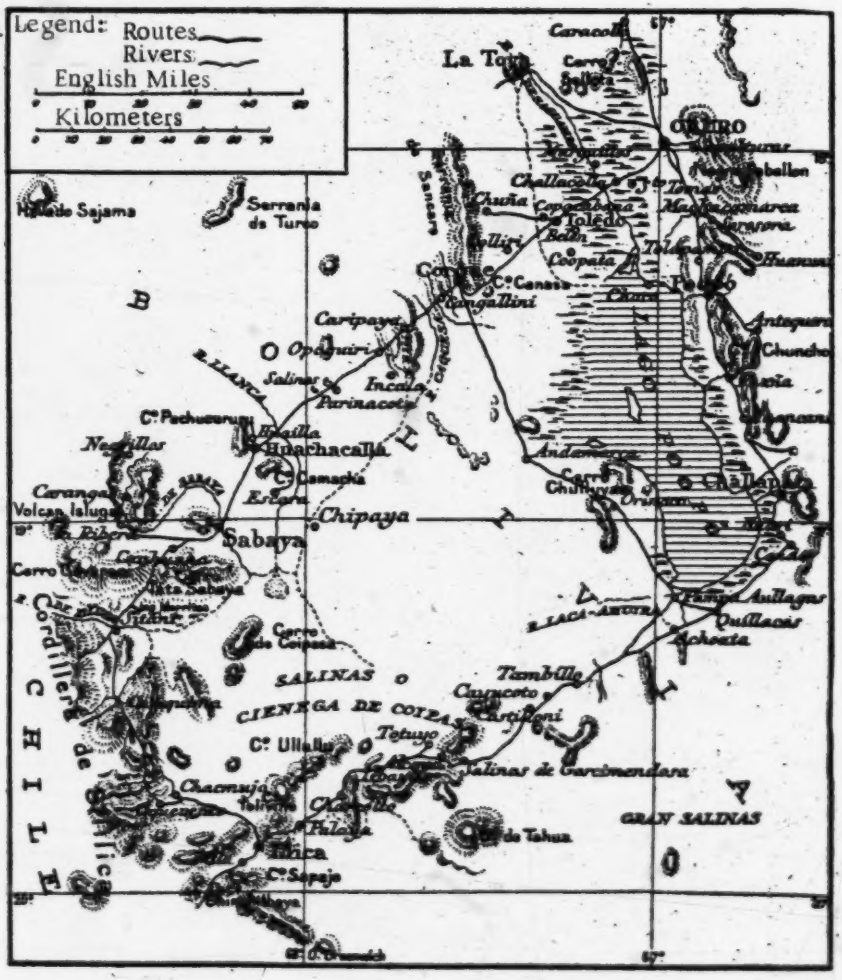
2:Métraux--4 E-5 (1930-1931) 1935, 1936 SF24 Uru SF24
Carangas-
Chipaya

/112 cont./

102
131
133
487



Map 1. — Carangas Province, after J.-B. Minchin.

/114 cont./

113 V. Huot, after the work of members of the mission, original unpublished sources, and the most recent documents, on a scale of 1/750,000; Mapa de la red de caminos del departamento de Oruro, confeccionado por el Ingeniero Sr. Nestor Crespo Diaz /Map of the network of roads in Oruro Department, prepared by the engineer, Señor Nestor Crespo Diaz/ (1924); Mapa telegráfico y de vialidad del departamento de Oruro, confeccionado por el Ingeniero Sr. Nestor Crespo Diaz /Telegraphic map and map of accessibility of Oruro Department, prepared by the engineer, Señor Nestor Crespo Diaz/ (1930).

●133 361 The village of Chipaya properly so called is located about 30 kilometers north of the Coipasa salt marshes and about 20 kilometers from Cerro Camacha, the first spur of the Cordillera to the west. To the east Chipaya is separated by more than 100 kilometers from the marshy banks of the Poopó. The village does not 114 361 133 stand on the banks of the Barras River or the Chipaya as shown on the map of the Créqui-Montfort Mission, the best that we have for the Bolivian Altiplano. The Lauca River, which flows to the west, is 10 to 12 kilometers away from it. Since all the maps that I have seen show the Barras River flowing between the Lauca and the village of Chipaya, I undertook several trips from different sides to verify this. Northeast of Chipaya, about seven kilometers away, I found the bed of a dried-up river, which perhaps corresponds to the course of the Barras River as it is drawn on some maps. This river must have taken another direction today, for having crossed it at the same time at the height of the village of Kala, a two-days' trip to the north, I was able to ascertain that it was Passably filled with water.

/114 cont./

114 passably filled with water. Insofar as we may trust Minchin's map,
36 undoubtedly the most exact on Oruro Department, Chipaya is
131 located practically at the intersection of 68° longitude west and 19° latitude south.

101 It is not superfluous to give the distances which separate
36 Chipaya from the nearest Aymara villages. These figures will
[199] help to explain the strength with which Aymara influence makes itself felt on these Indians. The nearest Aymara hamlet is Iscara, which can be reached in a half-day's walk. Sabaya to the south-
[631] east is hardly farther away. /115/ As for Huachacalla, upon which the "canton" of Chipaya is administratively dependent, my observations and the remarks of the natives make me estimate the
[484] distance to it as 40 kilometers. From Chipaya one reaches Andamarca, near the Poopó, after three days on foot, and Orinoco, on the very edge of the vast marsh, in two days and a half.

133 Taking the data on the map of the Créqui Montfort Mission
36 as a basis, I estimate the altitude of the village of Chipaya at roughly 3,700 meters above sea level.

161 Statistics. I was able to gather the names of about 320 Cipaya living today. This figure is certainly somewhat less than the real one, because I was not able to record in my list a certain number of people who were absent or living in their "water houses." Zenon Bacarezza (1), in an official report presented to the Bolivian

[113]

1. Bacarreza (Zenón), "Fragmento del informe presentado al Supremo Gobierno por el señor..., comisionado del Ministerio de Colonización y Agricultura para el estudio físico y estadístico de la Provincia de Carangas del Departamento de Oruro /Part of the report presented to the Supreme Government by Señor..., commissioned by the Ministry of Colonization and Agriculture for a statistical

Carangas-
Chipaya

/117 cont./

197 had to manifest itself through the intermediary of Aymara. The Uro dialect of the Čipaya is thus an ailing language in the process of disappearing in the future that I believe to have saved from oblivion, if not in its entirety, at least to a great extent.

133 137 The territory. The physical envionment is that of the puna (Pl. VI, A /see p. 30 /) artificially altered by man. If one arrives in Chipaya coming from the north, one traverses for almost a day an uninterrupted succession of sand dunes, to which some tufts of long, hard gramineous plants (iču, Stipa ichu (Jarava) or the black, twisted stalks of tolas (Baccharis Lepidophyllum and other Compositae) cling. Once the dune area has been crossed the terrain becomes completely flat, and the rarer tolares alternate with the mossy swellings of yareta (Azorella). In places the vegetation disappears completely, but the most sterile parts are adorned with some Alpine flowers, which make imperceptible spots of color against the greyness of the ground. The Indians are [301] not disdainful of them. I remember having seen them gather [324] bunches of them during a festival to stick in their hair or to decorate [134] the images of saints. The aridity of this sandy soil manifests itself with an intensity which becomes more and more acute the closer one comes to Chipaya territory. The boundary is marked by the complete disappearance of the plants mentioned above and by the appearance of stunted grass, thinly sown, which hardly [311] reaches a few centimeters in height. These wretched pastures are 312 the product of human industry. The Čipaya obtain them thanks to a system of irrigation that would do honor to their spirit of enterprise were it not the necessary condition of their existence in this environment. Using canals, some of which are almost two meters deep and three meters across, they have diverted a part of the waters of the Lauca River and conducted it by secondary branches across the entire extent of their territory. During the rainy season and the period of great floods, they provoke inundations by raising a few dams here and there. The water fertilizes the sands of the

/117 cont./

312 puna, which are covered with sparse herbage. In some places
[346] lagoons are formed which are propitious for growing water plants,
331 which serve as food for the pigs, as black and hairy as boars. The
137 Čipaya assert that 12 kinds of plants grow in their soil, the names of which they obligingly enumerate in prayers to their divinities. As I am not a botanist /118/ I could not verify the accuracy of this assertion. It nonetheless reveals a certain care for precision among the Čipaya, which is perhaps superfluous when one considers the scantiness of this flora which a little wetness causes to grow in the
132 midst of sand. In January and February the territory of Chipaya
[133] has the appearance of a vast swamp. This monotonous and desolate
[346] land is suddenly transfigured as if animated by the magic of the refraction of a supernatural life: a few small religious buildings plastered with white earth are transformed into sparkling mosques, the "water houses" and the enlarged and multiplied pigsties give birth to strange cities which line the edges of immense lakes in which bizarrely cut mountains are reflected. In the sky the clouds draw into strange formations and assume a luster elsewhere unknown. It is also the period of great storms. There are days when half the horizon is illuminated by the sun while the other, in the night, is ravaged by the tempest and furrowed by lightning.

[133] Without these periodic inundations the territory of Chipaya would be only a sandy plain identical with those denuded expanses which separate it from the Coipasa salt marshes. Thus the existence of the Čipaya depends on the flooding of the Lauca River, which, practically dry in winter, carries a considerable amount of water in the summer. Sometimes it happens that the characteristic winter dryness is prolonged into the summer months, threatening to destroy, along with the wretched grassy vegetation
132 of the "canton," the flocks which feed upon it. This is the most
221 crucial time of the year, the one in which the fortunes of the tribe
796 are at stake. Hence it is not astonishing that all the great festivals of the Čipaya take place at this time and that all have the

/119 cont./

133 No one yet knows to what extent environment can influence
182 the religious conceptions of a human group, but if environment does indeed exercise the action on imagination which formerly was credited to it there can be no doubt that Cipaya mythology would have to abound in harsh and cruel elements. Life in the
[52] Carangas deserts is hard. The Indians are the first to acknowledge this, and they speak of their territory only with a dull bitterness: "these bare plains where we live," such is the expression which
133 most frequently recurs. Few regions have given me such an impression of emptiness as Chipaya. The mountains on the horizon rise on the plains as if emerging from the sea. The color of this territory is a uniform green verging on the grey cut by the dunes in a pale stroke.

This landscape would be most desperately monotonous without the escape afforded by the Kimsa chata, the three snowy summits which are glimpsed to the north. The Sajama, one of the most beautiful peaks of the Andes and which the Cipaya worship, is not visible from the village itself, Cerro Camacha hiding it from sight.

136 The small artificial lakes of Chipaya attract a considerable number of water birds of different species. The flamingos (parina) (Phoenicopterus andinus, Phil.) whose insipid meat is rightly disdained by the Indians and which abound in Chipaya bring the only lively note into the monotony of the landscape. Nothing is more impressive than a flock of these marvelous birds outlining themselves in red against the brilliant blue of the puna sky. The
237 Indians use their feathers to decorate their hats at the time of the
825 great festivals. The eggs of these flamingos must be associated
[782] with symbols of a religious or magical type for the Indians never fail to place one or two at the foot of the sacred sheaves which are one of the principal accessories of their pagan worships. I
[301] have even seen individuals who put on curious diadems made of flamingo eggs threaded together.

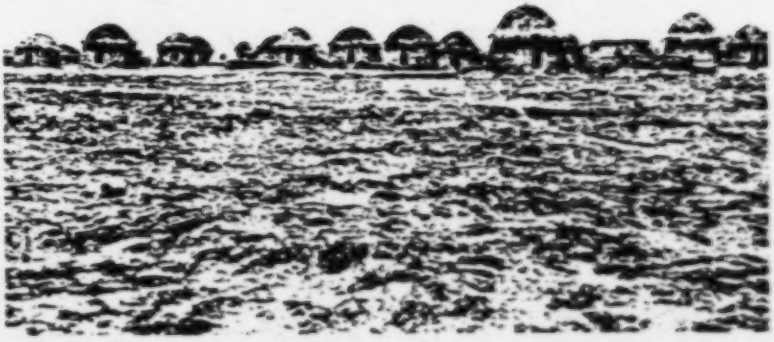
2:Métraux--30 E-5 (1930-1931) 1935, 1936 SF24 Uru SF24
Carangas—
Chipaya

● 133

Plate VI

A. — The Carangas puna.

342
361



B. — Chipaya village: the western saya (saxata).

/338 cont./

*n78 n76 823 [782] The mountains (1). In their prayers the Čipaya invoke the

1. On the worship of mountains in the ancient Peruvian empire, consult Jijón y Caamaño, La religion del Imperio de los Incas, pp. 328-342.

mountains on their horizon in general and certain summits, such as the Sajama, in particular. The latter is the most sacred of all, for from it comes the Lauca River which fertilizes the wretched Chipaya plain. The Indians relate that there lived in Sajama a spirit (male or female) who made the contents of a pot boil so that steam was seen escaping. Sajama is now an extinct volcano.

[782] The Lauca River. Like the mountains the Lauca River is a divinity who demands offerings and blood sacrifices. As the Pačamama has been associated with the Virgin, so the Lauca River has been confused with María, who for the Čipaya, it seems, is a personage distinct from the Virgin; this is why the Lauca River is called Santa María Lauca. Its name is followed in a prayer with the double epithet of mal'ku and tal'a. These qualificatives would oblige us to assume that this river is symbolized by a pair of demons or considered in itself as being both male and female. I have not been able to obtain any clarification on this point, all the less so as the Čipaya have very rudimentary if any knowledge of mythology. These contradictory attributes given to the Lauca River perhaps are only an empty form without importance.

[796] [782] The Čipaya assured me that they hold a festival each year for the Lauca River. On this occasion one specimen of the three kinds of animals who live in Chipaya is sacrificed to it.

*n78 The sacred sticks. These are not lacking in any Čipaya hut, where they are set against the wall facing the door. The Indians worship them /339/ at home, as they told me, and I actually saw them placing censers at the foot. These sticks, one of which is reproduced here (Pl. XVI, D /see p. 137/), are made of palm-tree

2:Métraux--211 E-5 (1930-1931) 1935.1936 SF24 Uru SF24

Plate II

Chipaya/Carangas Aymara SF5

A. Landscape of the puna in the neighborhood of Chipaya.

B. The Aymara village of Lucara seen from the church tower.

2:Métraux--213 E-5 (1930-1931) 1935, 1936 SF24 Uru SF24
Carangas-
Chipaya

133
342
361

Plate IV

A. One of the estancias of Chipaya.

[346]

B. The little church of Chipaya, between the two "moieties."

3:Vellard--i D,E-5 (1938-1944) 1949 SF24 Uru SF24

Plate I

133

1. The plain of the Desaguadero seen from Iru-Itu in 1938.

[233]

2. Photograph taken from the same point in 1942. The Desaguadero is reduced to a plain of sand, without water.

Photos by J. Vellard

/145/

/Pl. I faces p. 145./

The last group of Uru Indians living in the village of Iru-Itu, or Angoake, on the banks of the Desaguadero, about 25 kilometers from Lake Titicaca, has almost entirely disappeared in the course of the last years.

A long period of drought between 1940 and 1945 has lowered the level of Lake Titicaca by more than three meters; at many points the water has receded several hundred meters.

At the time of my first trip in 1938, the village of Iru-Itu had about 100 inhabitants; the Desaguadero went through vast swamps dotted with numerous ponds and lagoons with a great abundance of totora beds /totorales/. In 1941 a plain of sterile sand had replaced the swamps and fields of reeds; the Desaguadero was reduced to a narrow, muddy ditch.

Because of this the Uru have lost practically all their means of existence. The swamps covered with reeds, the totora beds, furnished them with the Scirpus necessary to make their fishing balsas and to cover their houses and served as shelter for numerous aquatic fauna: fish, suches (Trichomycterus dispar and rivulatus), bogas, hispe, carache (various Orestias), and birds sought by the Indians for their meat and eggs. Their entire economy, based partly on hunting and fishing and partly on the sale of totora fishing balsas and mats to the neighboring Indians, has thus been destroyed.

Many of the Uru are dead. Others, the young ones, have dispersed, mingling with the neighboring Aymara groups; some have joined the Lake Titicaca fishers. The old ones, more attached to their customs and their /146/ traditions and incapable of adapting themselves to new conditions of existence, have remained in the dead village.

In 1944 most of the houses had been abandoned; the totora roofs could not be repaired for lack of reeds, and many had given way. Only 21 people remained in the village; several women were of Aymara origin, and the few children were in part Uru-Aymara half-breeds.

/146 cont./

[6] [62] [33] According to the latest news the group of Iru-Itu seems to be reduced to some 12 people, although since 1946 the level of the lake has risen considerably; in February 1947 it had already risen 90 centimeters. This rising movement is continuing, and the totora beds are slowly beginning to reform.

[73] The old Uru remembered having seen in their youth, around 1870, an even worse drought than that of these last years. But at that time they were more numerous and the group was able to subsist. Now it is too diminished to reconstitute itself and its disappearance seems definite.

[0] I visited the Uru of Iru-Itu for the first time in 1938. During my stay in Bolivia from 1940 to 1944 I was in constant con-
[2] tact with them. Their misery and their decline did not allow me to glean important observations on their material culture, already studied by the numerous ethnographers who have stayed among the Uru of the Desaguadero. Their imminent disappearance made it necessary, however, to bring together everything which might still exist among them: anthropological observations, traditions, and linguistic records, in order to compare them with the other populations of the region and especially with the different groups of fishers on Lake Titicaca.

These are the results of this study, the publication of which we are beginning.

/147/

Note I

Accounts and Conversations

[4] The linguistic records at our disposal on the Uru are reduced to some quick observations and more or less expanded vocabularies gathered by travelers in the course of brief stays in the region of Iru-Itu. Métraux is the only one to have published texts in the Chipaya dialect. No text exists in the Iru-Itu dialect, and the best sources of linguistic information on

4:Vellard--4 D.E-4,5 (no date) 1959-1960 SF24 Uru SF24

[16th Century]

/31 cont./

195 They build their houses on the water on rafts of hay or rushes,
[342] which in Peru are called totora and in New Spain tule....

...They subsist on the fish of the lakes, which is abundant,
[262] although not very good....They dress badly and eat, aside
[181] from fish, what they can steal from their neighbors on land;
they are crude and coarse and almost bestial people. They
[248] were not accustomed to pay tribute or service; and on a general
[251] visit that Don Francisco de Toledo made he had them entered
in a tax register and settled off the water, and thus they now
pay tribute and service and live under the Church and in some
order..../Translated from the Spanish./

(Descripción del Reyno del Perú /Description of the Kingdom of Peru/...., 1597. Quoted by Victor M. Maurtua: Juicio de límites entre el Perú y Bolivia /Arbitration of boundaries between Peru and Bolivia/, Barcelona, 1906, I, 293-296.)

/32/ Herrera (Antonio de)

[124] ...in (this lake of Titicaca) there grow large quantities
of a reed which they call totora, which is fodder for horses and
pigs, and which the Uro Indians use to make houses and boats
[101] and for food, and whatever else they need. These Uros are so
wild, that when asked who they were, they replied that they
were not men, but Uros, as though they were another species
of animals..../Translated from the Spanish./

(Historia general de los hechos de los Castellanos en las Islas y /General History of the Deeds of the Castilians in the Islands and/...., Madrid, 1601-1615, III, 5th decade, p. 92.)

Acosta (Father José de)

[33] Into this lake (Titicaca) flow ten voluminous rivers, it has
only one outlet and not a very large one, although it is said
to be extremely deep; over which it is not possible to build a
bridge, owing to the depth and breadth of the water, nor to
cross over in a boat, owing to the fierceness of the current.
[illegible] so what they say.

BOLIVIA

VISIT TO THE CHIPAYAS

Professors Jorge Ruiz and Augusto Roca have recently been living among the Chipayas of the village of Santa Ana, a little-known group of the Sabaya Canton of the Province of Carangas in the Department of Oruro, Bolivia. We quote them as follows:

"The Chipayas were corraled by the Aymara-Kolla into the lonely salt pits in the Southwestern part of the Plateau region. In spite of this fact they have retained a certain vigor and are far from being extinguished. Those who remain may be calculated at about a thousand individuals, who occupy an extension of territory very limited in proportion to the number of inhabitants. Like their brothers, the Urus, it appears that originally their way of life was essentially lake-dwelling, but when they were thrown into a region of deserts and salt marshes, which dried up with the passage of the geological epochs, they were converted into a pastoral and agricultural people who adjusted their way of life to an amazing degree to the adverse conditions of the territory in which they were obliged to live.

The few travelers who have been fortunate enough to arrive at the village of Santa Ana de Chipaya would agree that the impression it causes is that of a living *chullpería*.[1] The village is divided into two sections called *sayas* with circular houses scattered about in disorderly fashion, all doors facing the east. The only observable foreign element is a small church with a tower separate from the principal nave, which presents the same architectonic form as the tower of the church of Sabaya.

The first impression one receives of the inhabitants is that of the purity of their dress, which does not present any influence foreign to themselves; this is especially true among the women who for the most part wear their characteristic hair style composed of many small braids, but also of the men with the classic garment of the *ira*, a sleeveless shirt which reaches to the waist woven of wool in a striped design. This impression supposes little mixture with their Aymara neighbors, although

[1] *Chullpa*: Pre-Inca funereal monument of Peru and Bolivia.

[English text continues on p. 217]

?:Ruiz Camacho J-3 (no date) 1960 SP24 Urs SP24
Chipaya

twenth century. To reach them today, you travel by train 131
from La Paz to the city of Oruro, then by car or bus to
Curaguara de Carangas. From there you must walk over [33]
a desert worthy of Siberia to the left bank of the Lauca
River, where a canoe must be found for the crossing,
before you go on to the village.

Little is known of Chipaya history. It has been con- 174
jectured that they may be the descendants of one of the
first groups to reach the American continent. They call 173
themselves the descendants of the *chullpas*, the ancient
inhabitants of the area who, according to legend, hid
themselves in reed baskets when the sun appeared for the
first time.

The *chullpas* are still in the neighborhood, silent mum- 122
mies resting in the square sod houses they built long
ago. The word *chullpa* is also used for the burial houses.
The ghost villages of *chullpas*, their doorways invariably
facing east, can be seen by travelers today. Modern In-
dians *avoid* them *with superstitious dread*. It is claimed 148
that the Chipayas are feared by the stronger Aymaras be- 182

[Text continues on p. 20-B]
[p. 19-D]

9:La Barre E-4,5 (1938) 1941
SF24 Uru SF24

American Anthropologist
NEW SERIES

VOL. 43 OCTOBER–DECEMBER, 1941 NO. 4, PART 1

THE URU OF THE RIO DESAGUADERO

By WESTON LA BARRE

IN THE giant reed, or *totora* swamps on the eastern or Bolivian bank of the middle Desaguadero, between Lakes Titicaca and Poopo, and shortly downstream from where this river forms the common Peruvian-Bolivian frontier, lives the remnant of a tribe which is in many ways an ethnographic puzzle. They are possibly Arawakan in linguistic affiliation, and their nearest language-congeners lie beyond the farther side of the great inter-Andean (Bolivian) *altiplano* from them, and beyond the eastern, continental Andes or Cordillera Real—*viz.*, scattered in the immense steaming jungle-swamps of the Amazon basin, in the Greater and Lesser Antilles of the Caribbean, and indeed at one time in a sizeable section in the south of the state of Florida. They form a distinct linguistic enclave in the midst of enormous territories of Quechua- and Aymará-speaking peoples. How the ancestors of this vanishing tribelet ever came to the extreme western border of the lofty, raw, cold, barren, and wind-swept *altiplano* from their tropical jungles is an absorbing anthropological riddle.[1]

Location. According to Polo, the Uru language at the end of the Nineteenth Century was still spoken in the following scattered places: *Akwallo maya*, some 20 km. from Ancoaqui and 40 km. from Lake Titicaca; *Ancoaqui*, on the left[2] bank of the Desaguadero, 23 km. from Lake Titicaca *Iruitu*, some 12 km. from the mouth of the Desaguadero (s. lat. 16°31'40"),

[1] The present sketch is believed to be the unique ethnographic account of the Uru in English. Former notices of this interesting and obscure group have been confined to one or two lines which barely identify them. The colonial Spanish literature, unfortunately, is almost wholly silent on the subject of the Uru, but all available references to them have been carefully checked and utilized in the present summary. In Spanish we have Posnansky's brief and somewhat disappointing notes. In French there is the linguistic work of Métraux, who visited *the Uru for a week in 1931 with the purpose of compiling a comparative Uru-Chipaya dictionary*. Métraux' incidental ethnographic notes on the Uru are excellent, and undoubtedly our best source on the tribe. As the Uru are today almost wholly extinct, though important to our general knowledge of South American ethnography, it is to be deplored that they have been so little known to English-speaking students.

[2] Métraux, *Contribution au folk-lore andin* (Journal de la Société des Américanistes de Paris 26, p. 75) is in minor error in locating this *community* on the right bank of the Desaguadero.

9:La Barre E-4,5 (1938) 1941
SF24 Uru SF24

Environment. The Rio Desaguadero, as its name implies, is the outlet of Lake Titicaca and flows roughly south to Lake Poopo.[1] Near the lake, where uptilted strata testify to a major geological upheaval at some time in the past, the river flows relatively swiftly through the rocky gate, but on reaching a broad valley between the range of foothills west of the Tiahuanacu plain and a corresponding range in Peru, it slows down considerably. The Desaguadero endlessly bifurcates as the river reaches the Uru swamps. The giant *totora*-reeds stretch higher than a man's head, and clumps of these are alive with numerous and almost tame waterfowl of many varieties, which apparently have never been hunted other than with *balsas*. In the clear, cold water of the river, dozens of varieties of water plants can be seen waving in the current, and in and out of these can be seen darting abundant fish—although these last belong to only about four or five varieties. Near the village half-wild cattle can be heard and occasionally seen plunging through the swampy shallows to eat the succulent white roots of the *totora* (the Uru have scant mainland pasturage for cattle or llamas). In the mountains back of their lands are pumas and vicuñas, but nearby there are only *viscachas* (a bushy-tailed, rabbit-eared rodent of the chinchilla family), the *altiplano* fox (Aymará *q'amaq'e*), and the domesticated guinea-pig.

The stony, dry soil at this altitude, when uncultivated, bears only *t'ola*, a kind of greasebrush used as a fuel, as is also *yareta*, a low, gray-green, semisubterranean mass suggesting a large, woody, resinous cauliflower; and a few small-flowered herbs. The altitude of the Uru country is about 12,000 feet, hence, though it is not far south of the Equator, the air is cold and rare. The rainy season, from late November to early March, comprises the summer. Although the middle of the day can be more than uncomfortably warm

[1] The best way to reach the Uru is to proceed northwest from Guaqui, on Lake Titicaca, by land over a small range of mountains or by water on the Lake, to the little village of Desaguadero, which straddles the river of that name at its head, being thus in both Peruvian and Bolivian territory. *Balsas* are the only means of transportation on the river, and it is imperative to secure experienced riversmen as guides through the elaborate waterways of the swamps in the middle Desaguadero. Storms on the river and the temporary loss of a luggage-*balsa* in the swamp made it for me, my one half-breed and two native companions, a two-day trip, though it should normally be made in one long day's travel. Instead of boating laboriously upstream on the return trip to the Lake, one may go by land cross-country north of Jesus de Machaca. The cold, dry winds from the mountains in this region speedily entail the minor inconvenience of chapped and bleeding lips, and in certain seasons it is a nuisance to find in travelling that rivers on which one had been depending for drinking water have dried up. Weapons, with which I stupidly neglected to provide myself, are probably more nearly necessary in this region than elsewhere in the *altiplano*. Bandelier noted cannibalism near Sajama in 1909, and according to Bolivian authorities, the flesh of murdered whites was an employed during native uprisings as late as 1923 in this Jesus de Machaca region.

9:La Barre E-4,5 (1938) 1941
SF24 Uru SF24

FIG. 1. Uru houses. *Above*, hut with rushwalled and roof; some crude plow at right side of hut and holes poles by door. *Below*, typical round Uru house with mat roof, Ayaviri style rectangular house to rear; Desaguadero swamps in the background.